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COMIX PLUGOLA

Jason Lutes has NEAR FICTION 2 [75¢ ppl, Box 979, 2 College St., Providence, RI 02901.

Dan Florian has some ug comix for sale. Send an SASE and want list to him at 2216 49th St NE, Canton, OH 44705.

CEREBUS 141 continues the Melmoth short story. Available at your local dealer.

TWISTED IMAGE 25 is $1 pp from Ace Backwards, 1630 University Ave., Apt. 26, Berkeley, CA 94703.

Times change. 150 years ago, the United Methodist Church of Kernersville, North Carolina elected a Pointer and a Beaner. The Pointer's duty was to call out the names of certain folks in the audience who were to pay particular attention to some point made in the sermon. The Beaner's job was to sit in the choir loft with a bean shooter and watch out for anyone who dosed off. The sleeper was then awakened with a well aimed bean.

HIPSPLOITATION?

Robert Gluckson is teaching a course through the Experimental College at the University of Washington called WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HIPPIES? I can answer that question. Nothing happened to us. We're still here, minus a few who died along the way. We're a bit shorter of hair and broader of tummy, but that's what aging does to you. Hey, lifetime hippy-cum-clown-cum-politico Wavy Gravy ran for office in the last Berkeley election. I still listen to the Dead, the Airplane, early dylan, Beatles, Stones, and read underground comix--not all the time, but probably more than the punk-cum-rap/hip hop generation.

Gluckson is doing a study of Tiajuana Bibles as a thesis and would like to hear from any of you who would be willing to answer his questionnaire. Drop him a note at the School of Communications DS-40, U of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195.

I've written about the TJBs as precursors to the minicomix we did in the eighties, but to answer Rob I never saw any of these comix as a kid. I saw them in reprint books in the sixties. The first time I saw one of the actual 8-pagers was at some underground artist's house and I don't remember who had it. The next time was when Monte Beauchamp found a stash of them and sent me one to look over. It's likely that those who saw the originals would be guys in their sixties and seventies now and I only have a few subscribers who fit into that category. Basically, the eight-pagers were sex comix in a time when erotica was hard to find. I doubt that they would stimulate the gonads of today's rock and rap audiences.

GOOD GIRL ART QUARTERLY for Fall of 1990 reprints a lot of Matt Baker's covers from PHANTOM LADY along with a couple of stories. PL was a hot sex comic I read and enjoyed as a teenager. It's almost as sexist and racist as the Six O'Clock News.

Robert Pasternak's ACID MAN 15 is $1.50 pp from COMIX WAVE, Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. 16 pp.

What happens to America's athletes? They sell products. I just saw Roger Staubach hustling designer garbage pails on TV's Home Show.

EL VIBORA 131 is $8 pp from J. M. Berengueuer, Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, Spain. Gilbert Shelton did the cover.

HELLBLAZER

Commentary by Davis Wallach

HELLBLAZER is DCs cor temporary bid for the audience of V IS FOR VENDETTA and SWAMP THING. The hero of this series is John Constantine, a haunted figure surrounded by an aura of doom and guilt. As the title suggests, Constantine exists in two worlds. One is modern London and its environs presented in a noirish and Victorian setting and the other the domain of demons of the netherworld who he encounters in both locales.

Constantine deals with the denizens of both worlds (shades of Lovecraft!). Although existing for four years in this manner, as per the longevity of this comic title, he has sent many of his naive friends to their doom and thus has no constant companions or lovers. He has alienated acquaintances in London and bears the hatred of demons he has bested.

This metaphysical fugitive continuies to draw the sympathy of readers by opposing villains we all love to hate: skinheads, environmental polluters, lynch mobs, etc. The writing is aimed at adults, heavily laden with psychosexual symbolism, wretchedness, and despair. Could this be DCs answer to the dark side of the Reagan-Bush-Thatcher era?

Exhibitionism is a form of social rebellion which is often misinterpreted. In the early 70's, it was suddenly fashionable among women office workers to wear the top two buttons of a blouse unfastened. Men usually interpreted this as a sexual invitation, but it was actually a form of rebellion against a previous office dress code under which women workers had to wear white blouses with high collars which were buttoned tightly under their chins.

Earlier, in the sixties, women threw out their girdles and panty girdles and some even stopped wearing bras and other items of lingerie. Men saw this as an invitation, too, but it was rebellion. These young women were sending a message to their mothers. Remember, it was always Mom who ordered the wearing of a training bra and it was certainly Mom who felt more comfortable knowing her daughter was on a date safely protected by a tight girdle. I'm sure Dads approved of these safeguards in the pre-pill days, but it was Mom who took daughter to the department store and bought them. My girl friend of 1953 used to take off her girdle and hang it on a bush while we had sex on a picnic table in Antelope Park.

In an overtly sexist culture like that of the contemporary United States where women are used to sell products, it is not surprising to find young men interpreting everything women do in sexual terms. The women are usually conforming to fashion or their own chosen image or simply personal comfort. Their comic book images, all created by men until very recently, have always been absurd. The male heroes all wear full uniforms to protect their bodies while they are fighting crime, yet the women heroines wear as little as the artist feels he can get away with putting on them. Look at Phantom Lady in the Matt Baker cover below. What is she, a damned fool? Nobody else would go out to fight crime

PHANTOM LADY No. 22

bare-legged. There is a good discussion of women in the golden age comics in William Savage's COMIC BOOKS AND AMERICA: 1945-1954 [U of Oklahoma Press, 1990].

Fashion has always caused women a lot more misery than men. Look at something as punitive as a high heeled shoe. Who, but an idiot, would wear such a thing, and try to run or dance in it? Hey, I work at a club in Berkeley and I see women out there dancing in high heels all the time. In the sixties the fashion mongers sold women miniskirts and minidresses. These flimsy bits of cloth barely reached a woman's pubes, yet women had to wear them because they were in fashion. For several years, women worked in offices and walked the streets in these clothes. Designed for skinny anorexic models, they were worn by heavy women who looked beyond ridiculous in them. Men, of course, assumed that the women would not have worn these peekaboo clothes if they did not want men to peek. The fifties skirts and dresses were long, well below the knee, and it was common to see a woman sit down and make sure her skirt was modestly covering her knee. How absurd to watch a woman make this futile gesture with the hemn of a miniskirt. We are not talking about hookers here. The women who fall into the fashion trap are regular folks who work nine to fives and have kids, but the miniskirts got them into more trouble than any previous fashion. Hip women seldom wore them. Entertainers and hookers wore them all the time. Hot pants were in for awhile in the mid-sixties. These skin tight pants became standard uniform for hookers in New York and Los Angeles and I suspect more than a few secretaries wore them to parties. Again, they wore them in rebellion against office dress codes that prohibited them. Since hookers and entertainers are glamorized on television daily, it is hardly surprising that these negative images enter the secretary psyche and become part of an ongoing fantasy life. We see such fantasies manifested at public events like Hallowe'en and New Year's parties.

Do not go out into the world and read only newspapers and magazines and watch the unbelievably impoverished and hypnotic junk that is on television. Do not get your fiction and myth from movies and your philosophy and poetry from magazines. It is not only because I write books that I want you to read them. But because I don't want to live in a world where most of the people I pass on the street haven't had anything to think about all week but headlines in newspapers and the stuff that passes for entertainment on television. I have worked for television and magazines. I know how frightened and scattered the people are who make the stuff you are being bored and confused and brainwashed by.

-Ellen Gilchrist

In a failing marriage the matrons of Bel Air and Beverly Hills have one fundamental axiom: to spend is to save. On the day of marital judgment the wife is called in front of the judge and asked what she has spent in the waning days of the marriage. That figure will determine the divorcee's maintenance until the final decree.

Lawrence Leamer
KING OF THE NIGHT:
THE STORY OF JOHNNY CARSON, 1989.

COMIX PLUGOLA

Randy Paske has a nice MISC Hallowe'en Special. $2/stamp from him at 4841 Birch Lane, Gilbert, MN 55741-9631.

THE BEST OF FEVER PITCH is $16.50 pp from Brad Foster, POB 166255, Irving, TX 75016. It's mostly reprints of Brad's own work. Adults Only.

There is a new line of funny sex comix out from Forbidden Fruit,m POB 699, Maugansville, MD 21767. One is about PUNTELLA PRIMM, THE SEXY SUPERSPY. Puntella is a chubby woman who has the kind of adventures Sally The Sleuth used to have in SPICY DETECTIVE. Another title reprints John Workman's SINDY and FALLEN ANGELS strips. $3.50 pp each. Age statement with order.

PHANTOM LADY No. 19

The legend of Betty Page continues in BETTY BEING BAD. Pix of Betty in the buff. This one was put together by John Workman and is $4 pp from Eros Comix, POB 25070, Seattle, WA 98125-1970. If Betty is still alive somewhere in the hinterland, she must be amazed at all the attention her young body is getting on the puberty market these days. A fanzine, THE BETTY PAGES, seems to sell well at our local comic stores.

The latest from Rip Off Press is ANNIE SPRINKLE in THE ADVENTURES OF MISS TIMES. $2.50. And is this a new trend, pornstars in the comics? I see that Personality has done one about Tracy Lords.